

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Napali Souza
Office of Representative Mele Carroll
Phone: (808) 586-6474

Molokai Irrigation System to Receive \$2.5 Million

Honolulu. House Bill 2179, Conference Draft 1 passed out of its final reading before the House and will go before Governor Linda Lingle for signature. The bill establishes a special fund to cover the repair and maintenance of various state and privately-owned irrigation systems. Among the recipients is the Molokai Irrigation System (MIS), which has been assigned to receive \$2.5 million. The funds would subsidize the plans, design, and construction of improvements to the aging system, including renovations to the transmission line intakes, the cleaning of blowout repairs, and maintenance of meters.

For Representative Mele Carroll, the appropriation is just compensation after making MIS her number one capital improvement priority early on in the 2006 Legislative Session. Considering her original request of \$2 million, the extra \$500,000 should come as welcome relief for the Molokai farmers she represents.

"Getting the appropriation this far took a great deal of effort," says Representative Carroll, "but it was a commitment that I cared deeply about. After its inclusion in the House Majority Package, I made sure that the request moved along and worked closely with my fellow Finance Committee members during Conference to bring some much-needed funds back to Molokai's agricultural community."

As the primary source of water for farmers on the island, the system serves more than 140 users on an island where agriculture remains the chief economic engine. Over the years, poor maintenance has hastened the system's deterioration and undermined its reliability and efficacy at delivering water.

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"The health of the Molokai Irrigation System is inextricably tied to the health of the greater Molokai community," says Representative Carroll. "Agriculture is an industry that's in harmony with the rural spirit of Molokai, and it is my duty to nurture this relationship that provides work, restrains explosive development, and leads Hawaii towards sustainability and self-reliance."

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